

***BEAUTIFUL SAVIOR***  
***LUTHERAN SCHOOL***  
***PRESENTS:***  
***PEARLS OF LOVE AND LOGIC***

***Special Thoughts on Raising Kids***

**Four Steps to Responsibility**

As a grade school principal, educational consultant, Jim Fay, often woke in the mornings scared for those children who never got into trouble. Now that may sound like an odd fear, but Jim knew from experience that well-behaved youngsters would eventually leave school a lot less prepared for the real world than those children who had learned lessons through occasional misbehavior.

Preparing students for the “real world” is one of the greatest gifts we can give our children. It means teaching them responsibility and decision-making at a young age.

**Building Responsible Children**

Parents can help children “practice” for the real world by adopting **Four Steps to Responsibility**:

**Step 1: Give your child a responsibility**

**Step 2: Hope your child makes a mistake** - If we don't allow our children to make mistakes, and then live with the consequences, we are really “stealing” valuable learning experiences from them. And today's mistakes - forgetting to finish their homework or leaving their lunch at home - are bargains compared to what mistakes may cost as they grow older.

**Step 3: Allow empathy and consequences to do the teaching** -Learning never takes place from parental anger. Instead, use empathy when you talk with your children, to allow them to look closely at their decisions.

**Step 4: Give the same responsibility again** - This is the most important step. It sends a powerful message to the child that he or she is smart enough to learn from the previous mistake.

**Essential Decision-Making Skills**

Problem-solving and decision-making skills are the building blocks of responsibility. Most children don't get much practice at it. They don't have the advantage of actually seeing the process adults use to make decisions.

**We can help children learn how to solve their own problems by following these steps:**

- 1) **Show understanding.**  
“I bet that really hurts.”
- 2) **Ask questions.**  
“How do you think you're going to work that out?”
- 3) **Get permission to share ideas.**  
“Would you like to hear what some other children have tried before?”
- 4) **Help the child explore possible consequences.**  
After every suggestion ask . . . “and how do you think that might work?”
- 5) **Let your child “solve” or “not solve” the problem.**  
Wish the child “good luck” with his or her decision.